

The Adventures of M&M by EvieSmallwood

Series: [Lost Moments \[1\]](#)

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Summary:

Max purses her lips. She's never really been one for heart-to-hearts, but with Mike, somehow the words come easy. "I've never... Never really had friends. I mean, there were these girls back in California, and they were nice at first, like everyone is, but they turned out to be total bitches. They said awful things about me behind my back, and ___"

"What things?"

The Adventures of M&M

Author's Note:

This is the first of (I'm hoping) many little one shots like this! I really wanted to touch on how Max and Mike became friends, or got over the bullshit, or whatever, so here we go!

She doesn't want to be alone anymore.

If there's one thing Max knows, it's that. Her whole life, she's been an only child; just another face in the crowd at school with no real friends. She's good at pushing people away, and she knows it. Good at distance.

But this... She can't be distant anymore. None of them can. It's something she feels, like an invisible tether tying her to each of these crazy people (some of whom she doesn't even know the names of). It's a lifelong bond. A secret band of insane kids and even crazier adults facing forces they don't even understand.

She contemplates this, rubbing her arms over the sleeves of her jacket. It's cold outside, but not overly so. Still, her breath comes out in puffs of white foggy air, and her cheeks feel a little numb.

But she needs this. She needs a moment to breathe.

Of course that moment is interrupted, and by none other than King Twerp himself, Mike Wheeler.

"Aren't you cold?" are the first words out of his mouth, because even though he hates her, he's still a considerate little asshole.

Max rolls her eyes. "No."

Mike clears his throat. He scuffs his shoes against the porch, eyes on her, and with a small huff she nods a little—he can sit, but she swears to herself she won't take any more of his shit.

It's quiet for a moment. Max gets the feeling Mike is the sort of guy

who respects silence; it's a much needed medium between loud and dead.

"I'm sorry," he says, after a while.

She doesn't really know how to react. He's stubborn and she's stubborn and she was pretty sure they were gonna go down the whole *"I hate you but you're friends with my friends so it's whatever"* path. This? Apologies? She wasn't prepared for it.

"I get it," is what comes out of her mouth, even though she really doesn't. She doesn't get any of this.

"I don't think you do."

Twerp. "Okay, explain it, then."

"It's..." he takes a deep breath, sucking in that *'complicated,'* and starts to worry his fingers. "She was gone. I-we all thought that she wasn't coming back, you know? But I guess I had a little more hope, and when the guys started hanging around you..."

"It was like I was replacing her," Max finishes, nodding with understanding.

"I guess so."

Max purses her lips. She's never really been one for heart-to-hearts, but with Mike, somehow the words come easy. "I've never... Never really had friends. I mean, there were these girls back in California, and they were nice at first, like everyone is, but they turned out to be total bitches. They said awful things about me behind my back, and —"

"What things?"

She glances at him, studies him; looking for any signs of what she's seen in almost everyone so far. Betrayal. A way to hurt her.

There's just genuine curiosity... and maybe a little bit of sympathy, with the way his eyebrows are drawn together.

Max takes a deep breath. Trusting usually isn't this easy. "They said that because of the way I dress and act, I must like girls. Like, *like* them, like them."

She remembers the way they'd been whispering, the way their eyes had widened when she'd caught them—they'd said it had been about someone else and she'd believed them (until that girl came up to her at that stupid party and called her a 'dyke').

"I don't, for the record," she blurts, when he doesn't speak for a while.

Mike starts to laugh. "No, I know," he says. "It's just... I just know what it's like. I used to get called 'fag' all the time, so did Will. It sucks. A lot."

Max nods. "I guess that's why I started hanging out with Dustin and Lucas. They're like, nice. Really nice. You all are."

Her cheeks are flaming, and he bites his lip to hide a smile. It fades a little, though. "What I said before, about you not being in the party... It was bullshit. You're one of us now."

She marvels at him, just a little. It's so weird, the way he holds himself now; better posture, wider eyes (or maybe just not so clouded)... She gets it, then; why he's the leader. It's a natural thing for him, like maybe he was born to command a circle of nerds. "Jesus, it's like you're a completely different person than you were an hour ago."

He frowns. "What do you mean?"

"I mean... okay, so it's like, you were this dark pit that sucked all the happiness out of the room—"

"Oh, *nice*—"

"No, I'm being serious! You're like, ten times happier now. God, it's like your batteries were dead and you got new ones or something."

His gaze trails out to the stretch of road beyond the cars, where it's dark and vacant. El hasn't come back yet. "She really did a number

on you, huh?”

He smiles a bit. “I guess.”

“That’s not necessarily a good thing, Wheeler. I mean, imagine what it would be like if you broke up.”

“That wouldn’t happen.”

“How do you know?”

“Because I lo—” he chokes a little. “Because she’s... even if it did, she’s a party member. We’re friends for life. Just like if Lucas broke up with you—”

“Woah, woah, woah, back up,” she holds up a hand, “Lucas and I are *not* dating.”

“Oh, please—”

“We’re *not*!”

“You *so* are. It’s so gross. He gets all moony when he looks at you, and your face gets all red—like that! Just like that!”

She shoves him, and he tumbles down a porch step. It gets them both laughing, until she helps him up and her right pocket crinkles. “Oh, hey!” She pulls out the packet of candies, leftover from Halloween. “Want some?”

“M&Ms? For real?”

“What?! It can be like, our secret nickname or something.”

He takes a handful. “The Adventures of M&M: Navigating Young Adult Relationships.”

She chokes on a chocolate, which sends them into another spiral of laughter—until headlights flash down the road and the Chief’s car is pulling into the drive.

Can’t come back from this, Maxine.

Author's Note:

Thank you for reading!